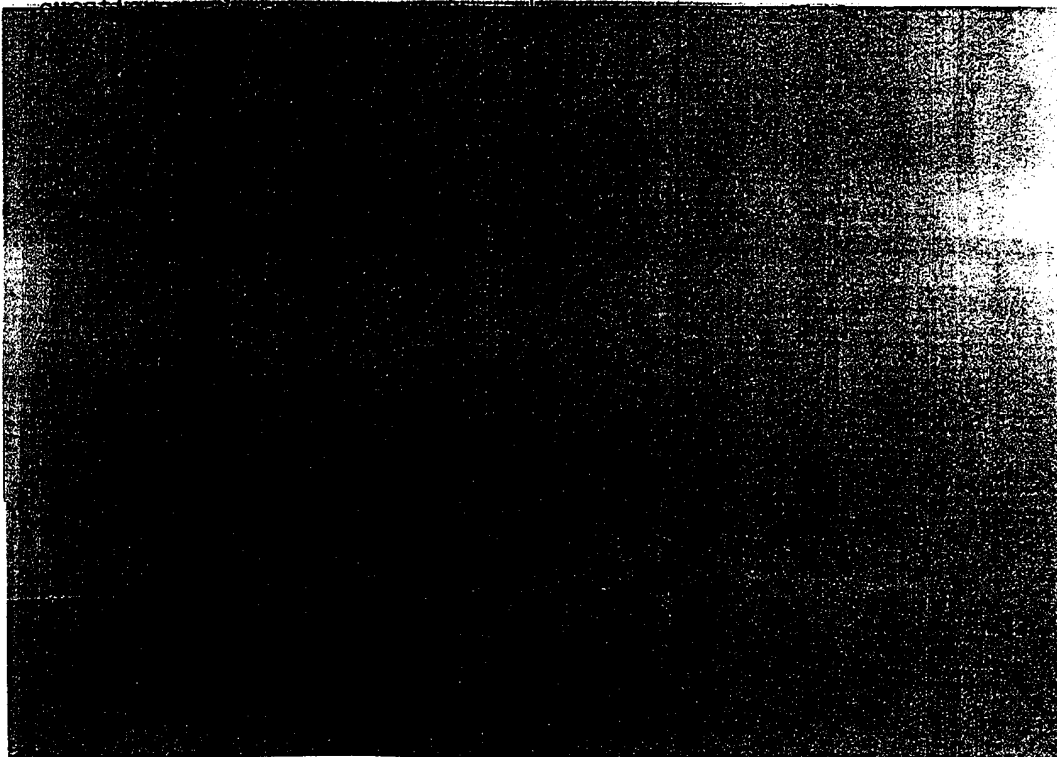


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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

21 April 1960



CARIBBEAN HIGHLIGHTS

Fidel Castro is evidently worried over his inability to eliminate the guerrilla bands operating in the rugged Sierra Maestra of eastern Cuba. The government is trying to belittle the affair, but Castro himself spent more than a week in the area reportedly personally leading operations--apparently without success. Although outlaw bands have long roamed the Sierra Maestra, continuation of the present activity could be important as a possible rallying point for anti-Castro elements. It is also likely to be a test of the support Castro retains among the peasants of the area--whom Castro claims to be the chief beneficiaries of his revolution. Guerrilla bands could not exist for long in the mountains with-

out the support of the peasants.

On returning from the area, Castro told newsmen he will have "important disclosures" for the Cuban people when he addresses them on May Day. He hinted that this might involve charges that the United States is supporting the guerrillas.

The Cuban leader, angered by recent decisions by the Supreme Court favoring owners of expropriated or government-operated private properties, probably plans drastic action to bring the court into line. He may be planning to name compliant President Dorticos to head the court. There are reports that Foreign Minister Roa, under

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fire from extremists in the government and discouraged by Latin American criticism of Cuban policies, may resign or be retired to the presidency. Armando Hart, present minister of education, is rumored to be slated to replace Roa in the Foreign Ministry. Hart would be susceptible to domination by pro-Communists influential in Cuban foreign affairs.

Castro seems intent on making the "mammoth" May Day rally in Havana a demonstration of strong support for his regime, not only by the Cuban masses but also by groups throughout the hemisphere. Evidently aware of the cool attitude of most Latin American governments, he is trying to show hemispheric support by inviting numerous political figures who, although out of office, retain reputations as liberal or "anti-imperialist" leaders.

They are to attend a "conference of democratic, political, and intellectual leaders" of Latin America which is to open on 30 April in Havana. Leftist and pro-Communist elements in a number of Latin American countries have been invited on expense-free visits to Cuba to attend this "conference" and an "Assembly of Solidarity with Cuba."

The Cuban Communist party is taking a leading part in preparations for the May Day rally and is using them in an effort to resolve in its favor the bitter internal rivalries with non-Communist factions in the powerful Cuban Labor Confederation. The Cuban Government is reportedly paying transportation and lodging costs for 18 Chinese Communists who are to participate in the May Day rally.

Leaders of the Cuban Communist party have privately expressed great satisfaction with their accomplishments since the advent of Castro and with the considerable influence they have over high Cuban officials, according to a usually reliable source. One top Communist is reported to have privately stated that "Castro can do more to further our aims than we could possibly do...we keep in the background and there is no need to do otherwise.... If we controlled the Cuban Government, we could not make the rapid progress we are making. Here we are doing things that cannot even be done in the people's democracies."

On the other hand, the Communists say they expect an imminent invasion by US-supported counterrevolutionaries or even US military intervention. In early April, two Communist leaders are reliably reported to have privately expressed hope that the Cuban people will be able to resist the intervention long enough to "produce the international climate to save us." They asked themselves why Cuba could not become "the USSR's Taiwan in the Caribbean." The secretary general of the Cuban party is reported on the way to Moscow to "sound out" Soviet leaders on a military commitment to Cuba.

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